

serious global health concerns in modern history and has spread to every continent, infecting and affecting people across the lines of race, class, religion, and sexual orientation. Sadly, a quarter of HIV/AIDS infected persons are unaware of their status and less than 30% of HIV-infected persons receive anti-retroviral treatment. Latinos and blacks are still disproportionately contracting and dying from AIDS. My home state of Florida has consistently ranked third in the nation in the number of cases of HIV/AIDS. And, the majority of infected persons reside in South Florida, which also has the highest concentration of uninsured people in the state.

In the absence of a cure, prevention, education, and antiretroviral drugs still remain our best weapons against HIV/AIDS. Culturally competent and age appropriate education about sex, sexually transmitted infections (STI), and treatment and prevention options must be available in our nation's schools, prisons and communities. And, the de-stigmatization of HIV/AIDS, sexual behavior, and sexuality remain no less important today than it was a decade and a half ago.

During his testimony before Congress, 22-year-old Pedro Zamora said, "What we need is the collective will to care about young people and about people with different backgrounds and make sure that one day people grow up in a world without AIDS." His words are timeless, and challenge us to be diligent in our efforts to stop HIV/AIDS, and the disease of intolerance in this country. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution commemorating the life, sacrifices, and grace of a remarkable man and teacher who has left an enduring memory and legacy that will inspire generations to come.

WOMEN ARE IMPORTANT TO OUR ECONOMIC RECOVERY

HON. RUSS CARNAHAN

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Mr. CARNAHAN. Madam Speaker, today, as Women's History Month comes to a close it is a good time to reflect on the many accomplishments women have been part of and to address what needs to be done further to fully carry out equality for all and get our economy back on track.

As we experience the most serious economic crisis since the Great Depression we will need the leadership of all Americans including strong leaders like Speaker NANCY PELOSI who was the first woman chosen as Speaker by her colleagues and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton who ran an historic campaign for the presidency. Both who have broken and shattered the glass ceiling have demonstrated remarkable accomplishment the nation can be confident in during these tough times.

This nation has faced multiple challenges that we have faced with the help of strong women. And today many women face challenges of succeeding in the workplace, caring for their family including their aging parents. I am proud of the work this Congress has done in a short amount of time for American working women.

It is telling that President Barack Obama's first bill signed into law was the Lilly Ledbetter

Fair Pay Act that reverses a Supreme Court ruling that made it more difficult for Americans to pursue pay discrimination claims. At a time when too many workers are seeing their jobs and wages slashed, we've got to make sure that all Americans are paid fairly for their hard work.

Congress has also passed significant tax cuts for working women and major investments in health care. To help get us out of this economic mess we also created thousands of jobs where women have new opportunities including contracting opportunities and the availability of small business loans.

Speaker PELOSI said it best: "Women want what men want: an equal opportunity to succeed, a safe and prosperous America, good paying jobs, better access to affordable health care, and the best possible education for our children."

President Obama and this Congress have made progress with all those issues in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and will continue to build upon those accomplishments with the passage of the President's budget blueprint, which makes investments in health care, energy and education—all intended to create jobs.

EARMARK DECLARATION

HON. STEVE BUYER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Mr. BUYER. Madam Speaker, consistent with the Republican Leadership's policy on earmarks, I hereby certify that my Substitute Amendment to H.R. 1256 does not contain any earmarks.

BEST BUDDIES EMPOWERMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES ACT OF 2009

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I am proud to introduce this bill supporting Best Buddies, an organization dedicated to the social integration of children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Founded in 1989 by Anthony Kennedy Shriver, Best Buddies is the first social and recreational program of its kind in the United States; it has already reached hundreds of thousands of Americans, both with and without disabilities, a total that is set to reach half a million by 2010. Best Buddies fosters and supports friendships and mentorships between participants from kindergarteners to adult professionals, sponsoring more than one thousand volunteer-led chapters at schools and workplaces. Not only do volunteers gain valuable leadership training—they learn first-hand about the important contributions made by their fellow-citizens with intellectual disabilities. And participants with disabilities learn that they are valuable members of our communities, capable of forming a wide range of real and lasting friendships.

This legislation authorizes a total of \$10 million for grants, contracts, or cooperative

agreements to be distributed to Best Buddies by the Department of Education in Fiscal Year 2010, along with such sums as may be necessary for each of the four succeeding fiscal years. These funds will enable this important organization to reach hundreds of thousands more potential volunteers and participants, promoting the crucial values of shared participation in community and social equality. I want to thank Congressman BLUNT for co-sponsoring this bill, and I urge my colleagues to pass it as soon as possible.

HONORING CELIA CRUZ

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and work of Celia Cruz, an icon of Latin culture and Cuban music. Despite her passing in 2003, Celia's contributions continue to shape music and inspire others. She lives on as one of the most successful Cuban performers of the 20th century.

Known around the world as the Queen of Salsa, Celia Cruz dedicated her life to music and the arts. Her 50 year career included 70 albums, countless gold and platinum records, hundreds of awards from prestigious institutions worldwide and three Grammy Awards and four Latin Grammy Awards.

Born in Havana, Cuba, she enrolled in the National Music Conservatory at a young age and studied musical theory, voice and piano. In the 1950s she joined the legendary group La Sonora Matancera and wrote many songs that have come to define Afro-Cuban music. In 1960 she left Cuba in search of freedom and in 1961 came to the U.S. By then she was recognized worldwide and the Salsa phenomenon soon spread across the U.S. and Europe.

In 1987, Celia Cruz was given a star in the Hollywood Walk of Fame, and years later Miami's famed "Calle Ocho" was named "Celia Cruz Way." Among other honors, including Lifetime Achievement Awards, Celia was invited to the White House in 1994 by President Bill Clinton and awarded the National Medal of the Arts, the highest honor our country bestows upon an artist. Most recently, her life and work were featured in ¡Azúcar! The Life and Music of Celia Cruz, an exhibit at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in D.C.

Celia Cruz is remembered for many things, including her distinct voice and unique style, but her trademark remains the popular word she often chanted: Azúcar, Spanish for sugar. Celia added sugar, spice and Latin flare to everything she did in life and never failed to surprise her audience. Despite her many professional accomplishments, many consider her marriage to lifelong partner and husband, Pedro Knight, her biggest success.

Celia Cruz's death on July 16, 2003 brought to an end a life filled with a love for art, culture and music, but her legacy lives on each time her music is played. She has undoubtedly left a footprint on Latin music and her influence will forever be felt through the work of artists around the world. As we celebrate Women's History Month, I ask you to join me in honoring the life, work and music of Celia Cruz,